

Exeter Fire District

(August 17, 2006)

Approved 10/24

Call to Order

Chairman Peter Lacouture called the August meeting of the Exeter Fire District to order at 7:16pm. Present were Commissioners Vergano, Lacouture, Wilbur, Nievera, Swanson, and Walker. District collector Ms. McMahon and district treasurer Ms. Caito were also in attendance. There were no members of the public present.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Previous Month's Minutes

Ms. Vergano moved (Mr. Walker second) acceptance of the minutes, as amended, of the June 29th meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Nievera will circulate the corrected copy to the board members as his earliest convenience.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Vergano reports the beginning balance of \$161,300.62 plus cleared transactions of \$58,653.94 (\$64,384.18 in checks and payments and \$5,730.24 in deposits and credits) leave a cleared

balance of \$102,646.68, as of July 11. For the period ending August 11 the beginning balance was reported to be \$102,646.68. Cleared transactions totaling \$11,623.25 (\$90,942.82 in checks and payments and \$102,566.07 in deposits and credits) leave a balance of \$114,269.93, as of August 11. These figures agree with the monthly statement from Citizens Bank. Mr. Nievera has reviewed the reconciliation summary and is satisfied with its accuracy. The uncleared register balance, including \$101,481.19 in uncleared transactions, is \$215,751.12 as of August 11, 2006. Mr. Nievera moved (Mr. Wilbur second) acceptance of the treasurer's report. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Vergano explained the Net Income Summary from July 1 thru August 17.

Communications

Mr. Nievera reported having received several pieces of mail over the past six weeks. Among them were: a reply authorizing the fire district use of the EWG high school auditorium for the annual meeting in April of 2007, a dept. of taxation form, the corrected invoice from Document Technologies, the invoice from our payroll company, the Verizon monthly bill and two monthly bank statements from Citizens Bank. An invoice for the sign placed in front of the fire station was hand delivered by Steve Haggerty and has been given to Ms. Caito for her action. A letter from Mr. Earl Adams concerning the minimum tax bill was read. It was decided that Mr. Nievera would answer the letter and direct Mr. Adams to the town tax assessor for

his action on this matter. Mr. Nievera also reports that the state legislative grant application is ready to be signed by the chair and sent back to the state house for their action.

Old Business

Mr. Lacouture will complete and mail the Municipal Affairs form at his earliest opportunity.

There followed a short discussion on the merits of opening an interest bearing (money market) account at Citizens Bank to “park” money until it is needed for disbursement to the organizations. Mr. Swanson asked why Citizens and not someone else. He feels we should shop for the best interest rate. Ms. Vergano told Mr. Swanson that Citizens Bank offered competitive rates and that she uses Citizens Bank as her financial institution. Additionally, Citizens Bank is the institution that the fire district utilizes for our checking account. Mr. Wilbur moved (Mr. Walker second) directing the treasurer to establish an interest bearing account(s) at Citizens Bank at her earliest opportunity. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. McMahon informed the board that, as of today, approximately 850 accounts had been paid in full and that \$329,376.44 had been collected and deposited to our account. Because of the proximity of the date of the meeting and the close of the first collection quarter, accurate delinquent figures were not available. Mr. Nievera will circulate these figures sometime next week when the delinquency letters have been processed and prepared for mailing.

Ms. Vergano stated that she had been in contact with Peter D'Orsi, our accountant, and explained the three options for our year-end financial records review. They are: (a) an audit (\$6000.00), (b) a review (\$1,200 – \$1,500) and a compilation (\$500). A brief discussion on the cost vs. benefit of each option, along with the fact that we have been in existence for only one year, caused Mr. Walker to move (Mr. Nievera second) to contract Mr. D'Orsi to proceed with a compilation of our first year financial records. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Vergano then explained that the process whereby the duties and responsibilities of the treasurer were transferred were not as obvious as it might seem. The process is being carried out and will soon be completed.

Mr. Lacouture introduced a copy of the new letterhead including the names of Ms. Caito, the new district treasurer, as well as Ms. McMahon, the district tax collector.

Mr. Nievera welcomed Ms. Caito as the new district treasurer. All thanked her for her interest in the position and wished her well.

Mr. Nievera then moved (Mr. Wilbur second) increasing the salary for Ms. McMahon by the 3% budgeted, retroactive to July 1. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Vergano stated the desire to enact a review system, not necessarily for the current employee, but rather for any future employees. Mr. Walker suggested looking to our payroll company for their review procedures. Mr. Lacouture then noted the large volume of work that was necessary to produce and mail the current tax bills. He singled out the efforts of Ms. McMahon, Ms. Vergano and Mr. Nievera and invited them and their spouses or

significant other to a “thank you” dinner to be held at the South County Tavern & Grill on September 5th at 6:30pm. Mr. Lacouture and Mr. Wilbur will sponsor this dinner.

Mr. Nievera reported that he has spent two or three hours online looking for grant opportunities with no positive results. There appears to be no one willing to support the day-to-day operations of an organization by way of the grant process. There are, however, many opportunities for matching or contributory funds for specific programs. The fire departments are well aware of these and make use of them on a regular basis. Mr. Nievera suggests removing this item from the agenda. He further stated he intends to continue to investigate possibilities. Mr. Wilbur is planning a meeting for the insurance sub-committee on August 26th. Ms. Vergano is looking for members for her ISO committee. Mr. Lacouture suggested contacting (former) Chief Kettelle for his possible involvement. Mr. Nievera Suggested asking Charlie Franklin of station #2.

Nothing has been accomplished on the common budget form discussed earlier in the year.

Mr. Lacouture submitted a draft proposal for a budgetary cap for inclusion to the by laws at the district’s next annual meeting. The cap, among other things, includes language for an approval by a 2/3 majority of the members in attendance for line items with an increase in excess of 5.5%. This draft was introduced this evening and will be discussed at the next regular meeting of the board.

A short discussion on the need for a reserve fund ended with the sense of the meeting that, without the funds to initiate a reserve fund

on hand, a line item in the next budget would be needed to start the fund. Revenue from penalties could be used in the future to add to this fund.

Mr. Lacouture will draft a by laws change causing the minimum tax to be reduced from the present \$20 to \$10. This draft will be presented and discussed at the next meeting of the board and, if passed, included as a by laws change at the next annual meeting.

Mr. Lacouture has information to disseminate, and will do so in an e-mail to the board members, concerning tax sales. Ms. Vergano asked if we could be selective in determining which properties would be involved. Mr. Nievera thought that might be discriminatory. Mr. Lacouture said that discrimination could only be claimed and argued by a “protected class” as defined by law, and that an amount of money owed in taxes did not constitute a protected class.

Mr. Nievera mentioned the subject of the current Habitat for Humanity discussion currently ongoing within the town and suggested board members familiarize themselves with the details and be prepared to discuss them at the next board meeting. He requested that it be placed on the agenda for the October meeting.

There were no new policy statements issued this month.

New Business

There was no new business discussed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the board will be held on October 12, 2006 at the Exeter Public Library. The meeting will start at 7:00pm.

Executive Session

In accordance with RIGL (§42-46-5(a)(2)) Mr. Wilbur moved (Mr. Walker second) the board into executive session at 8:53pm. The motion carried unanimously. The board returned from executive session at 8:58pm.

Adjournment

Mr. Walker moved (Mr. Nievera second) adjournment at 8:58pm. The motion carried unanimously.

**Respectfully submitted,
Bill Nievera, Clerk
Exeter Fire District**